



STATE OF WASHINGTON
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND
HEALTH SERVICES**
CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION
PO Box 45040 • Olympia WA • 98504-5040

STATE OF WASHINGTON
**OFFICE OF THE FAMILY AND
CHILDREN'S OMBUDSMAN**

*6720 FORT DENT WAY, SUITE 240
TUKWILA, WA 98188*

January 25, 2012

Dear Colleague:

We are inviting you to participate in a special work group being convened to review case situations and offer recommendations involving severe abuse of adopted children. Common elements related to child abuse and neglect noted in several of these cases include:

- Child locked in a room;
- Withholding food from the child;
- Disparaging remarks about the child and discrediting the child as a liar;
- Exaggerating or misstating the child's negative behaviors;
- Forcing the child to remain outside the home; denying the child access to toilet facilities; and
- Isolating the child from the community, such as by removing the child from public school.

In response to a cluster of very concerning situations in 2011 involving starvation or severe abuse of children in adoptive families, we are asking the work group to address concerns and make recommendations in the following three areas:

- 1) Children adopted from other countries living in Washington state;
- 2) Children adopted from other states;
- 3) Children adopted from Washington state's foster care system.

As part of the charge of the work group, we would like your input on the following questions and topics (this is not an exhaustive list):

- 1) Are neglect and abuse, including withholding food on the rise and are they more prevalent in adoptive homes?
- 2) Does age, race, gender play a role in abuse of adopted children?
- 3) Are changes needed to the adoption process involving foreign and/or cross-race adoptions, and the adoption of children from the foster care system?
- 4) What are the lessons learned from the case situations you reviewed? What are the implications/recommendations for day to day child welfare practice?
- 5) Are incident rates of child abuse and neglect in adoptive homes commensurate with incident rates in biological parent homes?
- 6) Do permanency goals and initiatives to increase adoptions have unintended consequences on child safety?
- 7) Are child welfare agencies able to maintain adequate data regarding long term outcomes of children adopted from the foster care system?

The first meeting of this work group will be held on:

Tuesday, February 21, 2012; 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Lookout Conference Room, 4th Floor
OB-2, 1115 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA 98504


Severe Abuse of Adopted Children Workgroup
January 25, 2012
Page 2

We hope that you are able to participate on this very important work group. We appreciate that your time is valuable; thus we plan for this group to be an important but a time limited commitment.

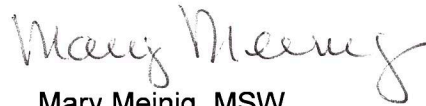
Please RSVP to Terri (TC) Canopy at terri.canopy2@dshs.wa.gov or by telephone at 360 902-7821 by February 3, 2012 regarding your availability to attend the Feb 21st meeting.

Thank you for your kind consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Denise Revels Robinson, MSW
Assistant Secretary
Children's Administration



Mary Meinig, MSW
Director - Ombudsman
Office of the Family & Children's Ombudsman